School District 72 (Campbell River)

Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility, and Competency Guide

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CAMPBELL RIVER
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About this Guide

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to help educators in the K-12 education system find and use appropriate and meaningful resources that will increase their ability to provide culturally safe and respectful learning environments.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY AND CULTURAL HUMILITY

Cultural competency involves being aware of and sensitive to your own biases and developing skills for interacting in respectful ways with people who are different from you.

Cultural competency does not require you to become an expert in cultures different from yours, it simply requires that you reflect on how your values and biases affect your interactions with others. It is only by understanding a family's, caregiver's, learner's, or colleague's culture through communication and relationship building that you can provide cultural safety (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2021).

To understand cultural humility, it is important to think about how culture is central in these interactions. The authors of the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards explain the importance of culture. The use of 'health care' can easily be substituted with 'education' and 'learning.'

> *"Culture defines how… information is received, how rights and protections are exercised, what is an… [education] problem, how symptoms and concerns about the problem are expressed, who should provide treatment for the problem, and what type of treatment should be given. In sum, because… [education] is a cultural construct, arising from beliefs about the nature of… [learning], cultural issues are actually central in the delivery of… [education and learning] (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services, https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas)."*

Thus, discovering and incorporating these differences help foster an environment that allows cultural humility to grow and take shape.

Cultural humility is a process, while cultural competency is an outcome (Foronda, 2019).

Foronda, Cynthia (2019). A Theory of Cultural Humility. Journal of Transcultural Nursing. Vol 3(1) 7-12

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains educational resources to develop cultural competency for educators. The inclusion of these resources is not an endorsement; as professionals, it is up to each individual educator to determine which resource works best for them. These are suggestions only and are not exhaustive.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE

Educators who work in the K-12 system.

School District 72 recognizes and needs to ensure that the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of Indigenous peoples in B.C. are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented. The district recognizes First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit as the Indigenous peoples of Canada, consisting of distinct, rights-bearing Nations, with their individual histories. The work of forming relationships based on the recognition of rights, titles, respect, and partnership must reflect the unique interests, priorities, and circumstances of each people.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

What is Cultural Competency, Safety, and Humility

A NOTE ON DEFINITIONS

The definitions in this guide are basic in nature. To be equitable and culturally safe, Indigenous nations and organizations may define cultural safety in a manner appropriate to the interests and needs of their community, or their Nation.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Cultural competency is the ability "to provide care to individuals with diverse values, beliefs, and behaviours… [to] meet their social, cultural, and linguistic needs" (Health Care Assistant Core Competencies, 2014). Whether a child or family feels culturally safe is dependent in part on whether the educator is culturally competent.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL SAFETY

Cultural safety means attending to cultural differences. It is also important to understand that power differentials, which are part of providing care, impact cultural safety.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) defines cultural humility as "a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of their own beliefs and cultural identities."

CONTEXT

Cultural humility and cultural safety are important when two or more cultures interact within the same space, as one culture is often dominant.

This means that the values of the dominant culture are placed above the marginalized group or groups. This is true in Canada, where many Indigenous cultures and traditions are often intentionally or unintentionally invalidated. Cultural safety means creating a space where these cultures are respected and treated equally.

In 2015 an Audit of the Education of Aboriginal Students in the BC Public School System reported significant inequities of outcomes for Indigenous learners in the BC public school system. According to the provincial Aboriginal How Are We Doing Report (2021), this continues to be true in almost every school district in the province today.

In 2019, Standard 9 was added to the Professional Standards for BC Educators which apply to all individuals holding a Certificate of Qualification to teach in British Columbia. Standard 9 states:

Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation, and healing.

Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community, and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit, and Métis worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL HUMILITY, SAFETY, AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

To be culturally competent, it is necessary to be aware of, and understand, the cultural belief of the communities where you work as well as reflecting on your own beliefs and identity and how they might create biases. Cultural competency is a necessary step towards building a culturally safe experience for learners. Developing cultural competency in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples will help you work towards providing cultural safety.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

Information / Facts

These resources were adapted from the Ministry of Children and Family Development for shared education and learning.

CONTENT WARNING: *The content in the following resources addresses topics that include information on residential schools, trauma including intergenerational trauma, and may trigger unpleasant feeling or thoughts of past trauma.*

Individuals who may need emotional support and resources can contact the Crisis Line Association of BC Mental Health Support Line at 310-6789 (no area code needed). Indigenous peoples who may require emotional support can also contact the 24-Hour IRS Crisis Line 1-800-721-0066. SD72 staff can also find Health & Wellness information on the SD72 District Health & Wellness webpage.

WHAT DOES INDIGENOUS MEAN?

Indigenous refers to a person who is native to an area. It is the term currently utilized by the United Nations, as well as the Canadian and British Columbia governments. There is no common definition, rather the basis is on self-identification with pre-colonial societies, sovereign territory, and cultural systems. Currently, the term used to self-identify within the Campbell River School District as agreed on by the local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities through representation on the Indigenous Education Council is Indigenous. However, Aboriginal is an accepted alternative term.

NOTE: Most Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples and Nations prefer to self-identify. If you aren't sure, it's respectful to ask.

EXPLORE LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

Aboriginal peoples, as defined in the 1982 Constitution, refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. Aboriginal is a legal concept.

- A Band is a legal term used to refer to a group of Indigenous peoples. Most prefer to use the terms Nation, First Nation, or Community.
- A person who is Status meets the definition of an Indian under the Indian Act and has certain rights and restrictions.
- A reserve is a track of land set aside by the Indian Act for the use of a specific Band or Nation.
- A person who is non-Status does not meet the definition of an Indian or chooses not to register, yet still identifies as First Nations.

NOTE: Indian is a legal term, and in most other contexts is considered offensive.

FIRST NATIONS

There is no legal definition of First Nations, but it can refer to both a collective (i.e., Simpcw First Nation) or an individual.

- As of 2016 there are over 172,000 people who identify as First Nations in BC, which makes up 64% of all Indigenous people in BC.
- There are more than 200 distinct First Nations in BC, each with their own unique traditions and history. More than 30 different First Nation languages and close to 60 dialects are spoken in the province.

MÉTIS

Members of the Métis Nation trace their origins to historic family lines in the Red River Valley and across Rupert's Land. Like the First Nations and Inuit, Métis people are distinct from other Indigenous people, and share a common culture, language, shared history, and homeland.

- As of the 2016 statistics, over 89,000 people identified as Métis in British Columbia. As of 2022, 24,000 Métis are verified by being registered with Métis Nation BC (MNBC), the provincial governing body. The national governing body is the Métis National Council, of which MNBC is a member.
- Métis people share collective cultural practices, kinship ties, and history as a Nation. The term Métis does not encompass all individuals with mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, rather Métis refers to a distinct people who have their own customs, ways of life, and recognizable group identity separate from those of their First Nations and European forbears. Although the Métis people are one Nation, they have diverse expressions of Métis culture. The Métis National Council defines Métis as… "a person who self identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, and who is accepted by the Métis Nation."

INUIT

Inuit refers to Indigenous peoples of Northern Canada, the word means 'people' in Inuktitut. Inuit people have a distinct language and culture.

- In Canada, Inuit have inhabited communities stretching from the westernmost Arctic to the eastern shores of Newfoundland and Labrador for uncounted generations. This area, known as Inuit Nunangat, refers to the land, and surrounding water and ice, which Inuit consider to be integral to their culture and way of life.
- There are over 1,600 Inuit living in BC, making up just under 1% of all Indigenous people in BC.
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national representative organization for Inuit in Canada.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

Indian Act

BACKGROUND

Coming into effect in 1867, the Indian Act (the Act) is the principal statute which the federal government administers Indian status, local First Nations governments, and the management of reserve land and communal funds.

The Act does not apply to Métis, Inuit, and non-status First Nations peoples. However, since the Daniels Decision in 2016, Métis and non-status First Nations are now considered under s.91 (24) of the Constitution, which places them under federal jurisdiction.

The Act was amended significantly in 1951, which removed many political, cultural, and religious restrictions; yet introduced new restrictions on status that discriminated against First Nations women. The Act was amended in 1985 following the passage of Bill C-31, which called for the reinstatement of status to those who had been discriminated against and giving Bands control over their membership list.

Despite amendments, the Act continues to be heavily criticized, and its historical impacts are felt to this day. The Act is administered by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

PRESENT DAY

Jurisdiction
Provincial laws that do not contradict the Indian Act apply to 'Indians' in that province.

Finances
Personal property and income is tax exempt only when an 'Indian' is living and/or generating income on reserve.

Healthcare
Essentials are provided by Non-Insured Health Benefits in BC. This is administered by the Fist Nations Health Authority.

Land and Housing
Reserve lands are held in trust by the Crown. Individuals cannot own reserve land unless they are granted a certificate. Housing on reserve is typically owned collectively.

Education
Schools can be established and run under the Indian Act. Educational funding is provided by Canada and administered by the Band. Children who live on reserve do not qualify for K-12 provincial public-school funding, therefore children living on reserve who attend K-12 public schools are charged tuition. This is known as the Nominal Roll. The Nominal Roll list is determined annually by the Band in cooperation with the local school district. Educational

services for Nominal Roll students are often guided by Local Education Agreements (LEA) and more recently (2018), the BC Tripartite Agreement (BCTEA).

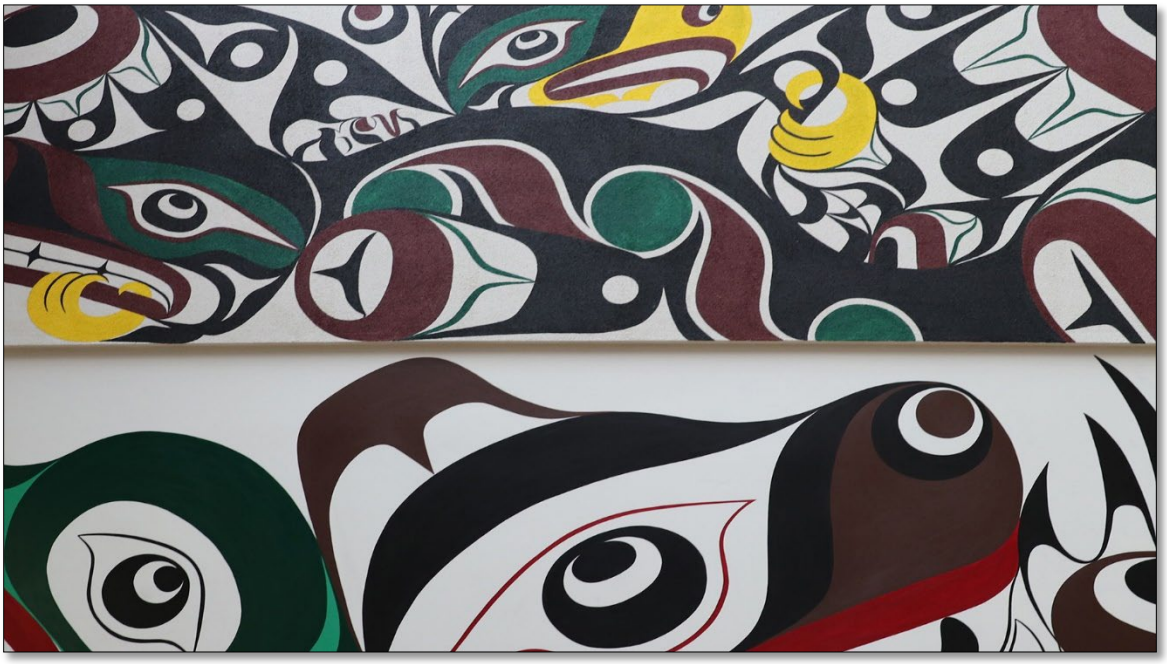
While the Act outlines rights to housing, funding for education and access to healthcare*, not all 'Indians' will receive these benefits*. There are limitations and exclusions to the medical coverage provided. Some reserves are limited in size and cannot offer housing to band members. The education funds offered are limited, resulting in students and families receiving partial funding or funding being deferred if there are more eligible students than funds available.

UNDERSTANDING STATUS

- Status 'Indians' may be eligible for a range of benefits, rights, programs, and services offered by the federal, provincial, or territorial governments.
- Status must be applied for. The Indian Registrar determines eligibility and maintains a federally controlled list.
- There is currently no federal register for Inuit or Métis. Métis people can register as members of their local or regional Métis organizations (Example: Métis Nation BC). Inuit people may be members of a land claim agreement.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

NOTE: Indian is a legal term, and in most other contexts is considered offensive



Residential Schools

BACKGROUND

The Canadian state funded church-run schools to assimilate Indigenous children into Canadian society. The schools operated from the 1860s to 1997, and over 150,000 children attended.

Children were often sent to residential schools far away from home and separated from their siblings in effort to destroy connections to community and culture. Other children were compelled to attend Indian day school each day, where they experienced the same types of abuse as residential school survivors.

Daily activities included religious worship, physical labour, and colonial education. Children were malnourished and exposed to the elements due to improper clothing and housing. They were punished with physical force and confinement for using their traditional languages or demonstrating ties to their culture. Children experienced physical, sexual, emotional, cultural, and psychological abuse. Many died while trying to return home, or from serious illness with inadequate medical care. Some residential schools had a death rate as high as 50%.

There were residential schools open in Canada until 1997.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

- 1951 Mandatory attendance is removed from the Indian Act
- 1969 The federal government takes control of the residential schools from the churches
- 1980s Lawsuits are filed by survivors
- 1990s Churches begin to issue formal apologies
- 1996 The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples conducts mass research on residential schools
- 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper formally apologizes
- 2015 Final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is released, including the 94 Calls to Action
- 2018 A new statutory holiday to memorialize residential schools is proposed by the federal government
- 2021 A new statutory holiday is established on September 30: **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

LEGACY

- The trauma experienced in residential schools have affected every aspect of Indigenous life, and has intergenerational effects on language, culture, and family and community structure.

- Cycle of abuse began with those who attended residential schools and has been passed on through generations. Many survivors feel feelings of guilt, shame, depression, hopelessness, and mistrust and anxiety around government institutions.

- The Métis experience had been underemphasized in the telling of residential school history. Métis people attended and survived residential schools, and many Elders are beginning to share their stories.

NOTE: Orange Shirt Day (September 30) is a commemorative event inspired by Phyllis Webstad's story of when she arrived at St. Joseph Mission Residential School in Williams Lake. This has now become the same day as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

Sixties Scoop

BACKGROUND

In 1951, amendments to the Indian Act gave provinces jurisdiction over Indigenous child welfare. Discriminatory child welfare practices led to a surge of Indigenous children in provincial care.

The Sixties Scoop refers to the large-scale removal of Indigenous children in provincial care. The scoop took place from 1950s through to the 1980s; although many have pointed out that over representation of Indigenous children has remained high since (the Millennial Scoop), despite shifts and policy and practice.

Due to colonial policies and intergenerational trauma, Indigenous children and families struggle with many social and economic barriers. It was provincial policy during this era to remove Indigenous children, often without consent of the family or community.

In BC, the percentage of Indigenous children in care rose 33% in 13 years – from 1% in 1951 to 34% in 1964. 70% of children removed were placed in non-Indigenous homes. Approximately 11,000 children were removed, but many believed it to be closer to 20,000 due to the erasure of non-status and Métis identity in the gathering of data, even though these groups experienced the Scoop. Children were separated from their families and siblings, many even being adopted out of the country, losing all ties to their culture and identity.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

- 1970 Indigenous communities begin lobbying for control over child and family services.
- 1985 Justice Edwin Kimelman releases a report concluding that ‘cultural genocide has taken place in a systematic, routine manner.’
- 1980s Many legislative changes take place, including requiring Band notification and prioritizing placements with extended family members.
- 1992 A moratorium is placed on non-Indigenous families adopting Indigenous children in BC, which was later replaced by an Exceptions Committee to determine care plans.
- 1996 BC passes the Child, Family and Community Services Act and the Adoption Act, both requiring greater inclusion of a child’s community and culture in decision making.
- 2019 Government of Canada introduces Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth, and families.

LEGACY

- The removal of Indigenous children continues to be a widespread issue; as of March 2018, 63% of children in care in BC are Indigenous. Indigenous children are often removed due to poverty, which is linked to systemic barriers and intergenerational trauma.

- The federal government has reached an agreement to commit $800 million to Sixty Scoop survivors for loss of cultural identity. This agreement has received criticism because it does not account for abuses suffered and excludes non-status and Métis survivors.

- There are currently 18 active lawsuits throughout Canada. The federal settlement is expected to settle many of them.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

Intergenerational Trauma

BACKGROUND

Through colonial assimilation policies such as mandatory attendance at residential schools, forced hospitalizations, and removals during the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous peoples have been subject to traumatic experiences that have affected their well-being.

Intergenerational trauma occurs when and older member of a community transfers the effects of trauma onto younger members, affecting their ability to lead healthy lives mentally, physically, emotionally, or spiritually.

Trauma can result in but is not limited to the loss of language, culture, and connection to community and family, low sense of self-esteem, internalized racism, disconnection from Indigenous and Western society, abuse, addiction, drug abuse, and suicide.

Different communities and Indigenous groups experienced colonization and trauma in different ways, resulting in different effects. For this reason, each Indigenous person's story and history should be treated as unique and valid.

IMPACTS

Self-Harm
Suicide and self-inflicted injuries are the leading cause of death for Indigenous youth. Suicide is respectively 6.5, 3.7, and 2.7 times higher for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis than for non-Indigenous people.

Children
63% of children in care in BC are Indigenous (2018). Indigenous children are 16 times more likely to be taken into care.

Violence Against Women
Indigenous women in Canada are 2.7 times more likely to face violence, and these women made up 24% of homicides nationally in 2015.

Prison
While Indigenous people only make up 4% of the Canadian population, they account for 26% of the federal prison population.

Community Health
First Nations communities have reported (2008-2010) that alcohol and drug abuse, housing, and employment are the top three challenges to community well-being.

Mental Health
Indigenous people struggle with mental illness at much higher rates, yet few programs or strategies exist especially for Métis, urban, and non-status people.

RESILIENCE

While Indigenous communities are often encouraged to move on from the past era, this feat is not a simple matter. Legacies from residential school, the Sixties Scoop, along with ongoing issue like inadequate housing, lack of capacity, and continued discrimination under the Indian Act makes recovering from colonial trauma an ongoing and complex process.

Indigenous communities are actively revitalizing and reclaiming traditional practices and fighting against ongoing colonial policies and attitudes.

Indigenous communities are actively healing from trauma. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation has identified three pillars to healing:

- Legacy Education - connecting past to present
- Cultural Interventions - re-centering Indigenous experiences, traditional teachings, and culture.
- Therapeutic Interventions - individual, family, and community healing events.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource *Guide.*

Structural Intervention

BACKGROUND

Systemic barriers are hidden in the rules, procedures, policies, and operations of organizations and are intentionally or unintentionally discriminatory. These barriers limit access to services, goods, programs, and facilities.

A structural risk is an issue that results from systemic problems beyond the control of any individual (i.e., poverty, housing, transportation, discrimination, etc.).

Because of systemic barriers, Indigenous children are over-represented in alternate education programs, suspensions, attendance, etc., and underrepresented in learning outcomes evidenced in school completion rates, learning assessments, as well as sports, enhanced educational programs, extracurricular activities, to name a few.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

- 2005 The creation of a New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples in British Columbia.
- 2006 The development and signing of the Transformative Change Accord and the Métis Nation Relationship Accord.
- 2010 Supporting the release of the Healthy Minds, Healthy People: A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance use in BC.
- 2017 The provincial government endorses the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' Calls to Action.
- 2017 The BC Ministry of Education introduces the Equity in Action Project which defines a collective and collaborative decision-making process for school districts to enter in to a genuine and meaningful self-assessment dialogue about the experience of education for Indigenous Learners and to respond in strategic ways to create conditions for success.
- 2018 The provinces release the Draft Principles that guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples.
- 2019 The provincial government passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples UNDRIP (Declaration Act) into law.

STRUCTURAL INTERVENTION

- A structural intervention allows the service provider to adapt programs and services to reduce the presence of structural risks.

- This type of intervention requires recognizing the existing social order and acknowledging that the cause of Indigenous peoples over-representation across the social sector is because of the ongoing discrimination and systemic barriers that they face.

- Structural interventions promote a holistic service delivery by treating the source of the problem, not the symptoms.

- The cycle of trauma will continue if systemic barriers and the source of problems are not addressed.

- Structural interventions help build strength-based, collaborative relationships with children, youth, families, and communities in British Columbia.

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

Jordan's Principle only applies to Status First Nations children, or children of Status First Nations parents, and is an example of structural intervention. Non-status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children do not qualify unless their parents are Status First Nations.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba.

Jordan spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while the Province of Manitoba and the federal government argued over who should pay for his at home care. Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old.

Jordan's Principle aims to make sure First Nations children can access all public services in a way that is reflective of their distinct cultural needs. It takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization, and with experiencing and service denials, delays, or disruptions because they are First Nations. First Nations Health Authority is leading the implementation of the Jordan's Principle in BC.

Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource Guide.

Cultural Safety

BACKGROUND

Due to a history of colonialism, oppression, marginalization, Indigenous people are under-represented in most categories of what would be considered successful learning outcomes. Indigenous learners often do not see themselves or their communities reflected in the learning activities or environment and when it is, it often feels like an afterthought.

Past and ongoing trauma at the hands of government institutions have made Indigenous peoples less likely to trust service providers, and cultural barriers may cause an Indigenous person to avoid taking actions to get the help they need.

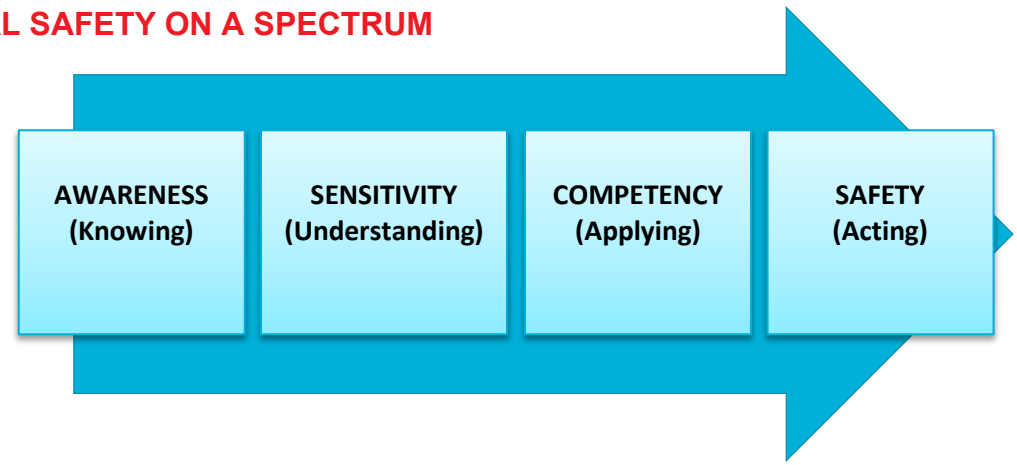
Government institutions and service providers are not designed by and for Indigenous people, and Indigenous people often feel alienated, humiliated, or under-served when they try and access support.

Cultural Safety is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe (First Nations Health Authority).

Cultural Safety represents a journey into wisdom, where wisdom is to know that culturally significant knowledge, shared histories, and experiences are relevant and must guide decisions and actions (MCFD, Aboriginal Recruitment and Cultural Safety).

Cultural Safety is based on a framework of two or more cultures interacting in a colonized space – where one culture is legitimized, and the other is marginalized. This can happen in schools, hospitals, workplace, and in many service settings.

CULTURAL SAFETY ON A SPECTRUM



Adopted from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2021). Early Years Cultural Safety Resource

Culturally Sensitive Learning Environments

Many teachers are understandably afraid of teaching Indigenous material poorly, perpetuating stereotypes or overstepping their bounds and engaging in cultural appropriation.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Cultural appropriation can take on many forms.

- It can be the adoption of elements of one culture into another without fully understanding or acknowledging their meaning.
- It can mean making use of sacred objects, like headdresses at Halloween for example, without learning about why they are sacred or important.
- It can mean presenting Indigenous peoples as caricatures or as existing only in the past.
- It can mean speaking on behalf of Indigenous people or taking on elements of Indigenous spirituality without getting permission from qualified Indigenous knowledge keepers.

Basically, cultural appropriation is taking and using important cultural elements that do not belong to you without learning about them first. It is setting yourself up as an expert on a culture you are not a part of, or not respecting the living existence of Indigenous people, the sophistication of Indigenous knowledge and spirituality, or the capability of Indigenous experts, Elders, and knowledge keepers. It is important to work with First Nations, Métis and Inuit in the development of learning materials.

STEPS TO AVOID CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND STILL INCORPORATE INDIGENOUS CONTENT

- Never dress, act, or do activities that reduce a group into a caricature or stereotype. If it's not accurate and respectful, it's not OK.
- Don't misuse anything of religious significance or cultural meaning, even if you don't understand exactly why. If you're not sure if something is sacred, it is important to ask or do your research.
- Don't practice culture in your classroom, teach about culture in your classroom.
- Never appropriate someone else's culture as your own – not even as a demonstration for students.

- Ask yourself: “If I were a member of the group in question, could I be offended?” Take history into account and show empathy.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION: TIPS FOR TEACHING

- Do, whenever possible, allow Indigenous people to speak for themselves. Inviting local Indigenous knowledge keepers into your classroom is an opportunity to forge new and ongoing relationships. If an Indigenous person cannot be present, there are excellent and well-vetted videos available.

- Don’t start with cultural genocide and residential schools. Indigenous people are not victims first. Take the time to learn about the many proud and resilient people who were impacted by Canada’s residential school system. It is important to work with First Nations, Métis and Inuit in the development of learning materials.

- Do learn and teach about contemporary Indigenous people. Not only do they still exist, but they are also the fastest growing population in Canada.

PREPAREDNESS

Investing time to prepare yourself to teach Indigenous content is crucial to success and helps to build confidence. There are many opportunities available, including completing an online course, attending Indigenous events, participating in professional development activities offered, and engaging with Elders or knowledge keepers.

The best resources are human resources. Indigenous people have time-tested knowledge systems, education, governance, and ways of raising children that are sophisticated and beautiful; you won’t regret taking the time to have conversations with Indigenous people in your community and learning about them. Also, don’t forget BC has 203 different Indigenous communities and each one is having a unique cultural identity, so don’t assume that the cultural identity of one Indigenous group represents all Indigenous groups.

In some places, having conversations with Indigenous people in your community isn’t easy and there is much healing to do. Some places where you can find experts on these matters include friendship centers, Indigenous Studies departments, and Indigenous student services at universities, and most importantly, the Indigenous education experts that the school district employs.

VETTING RESOURCES

As a general guide, look for these four things and work with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people:

1. **Content and accuracy:** Make sure that the content makes sense and portrays Indigenous people in a whole-person, fair way.

2. **Authorship**: Try to privilege Indigenous authors. There are also many non-Indigenous people with expertise in Indigenous studies, but it is important to make sure that they do have authentic expertise. Do Internet searches to check authors' biographies and credentials.

3. **Approachability**: Choose resources that reflect where you are and who your students are. You can also connect students' interests to Indigenous content. Choose a subject of interest and go from there. Avoid resources or content that might 'exclude' or 'marginalize' Indigenous learners.

4. **Diversity:** Indigenous people have knowledge of content that touches on all subject areas, so teachers can integrate Indigenous content into any classroom. Including Indigenous content in every subject underlines the sophistication of Indigenous knowledge. You can also use Indigenous content to share diverse perspectives and compare mainstream and Indigenous views on historical and current events.

Adapted from EDCAN Network: Equity, Indigenous Learning, Teaching: Truth and Reconciliation in YOUR Classroom (2018)

Sources

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PHOTO CREDITS

- Page 2, Penfield Elementary Indigenous Day Celebration June 13, 2022, Drummer Shana Smith.
- Page 4, Sandowne Elementary Drum Birthing Ceremony April 14, 2022, Wei Wai Kum Nation Elder and Cultural Mentor Will Henderson.
- Page 8, Timberline Secondary School Mural by Jessica Chickite of the We Wai Kai Nation.
- Page 10, Wei Wai Kum Kwanwatsi Big House September 27, 2019, Orange Shirt Day Walk for Reconciliation.
- Page 12, Every Child Matters Feather Carvings by Wei Wai Kum Nation Elder and Cultural Mentor Will Henderson.
- Page 14, Métis Sash, School Board Office grounds.
- Page 20, Carihi Secondary School Totem Pole by Bill Henderson.

Acknowledgement

SD72 operates on the traditional territories of the Laichwiltach, Klahoose, Homalco, and K'omoks First Nations. We honour our relationship with these First Nations, and all other First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who reside in these territories.